

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:
Application Non-Construction

2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):

2b. APPLICATION ID:
15VS170685

3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:

STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:
13VSWTX015

5. APPLICATION INFORMATION

LEGAL NAME: Chisholm Trail RSVP

DUNS NUMBER: 784693541

ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):

4208 N Interstate 35
D-5
Denton TX 76207 - 3441
County:

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):

NAME: Christina Penland

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (940) 383-1508

FAX NUMBER: (940) 387-0862

INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: VISTA@rsvpserves.org

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):

751959671

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:

7a. Non-Profit

7b. Self-Incorporated Senior Corps Project

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).

NEW NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE
 CONTINUATION AMENDMENT

If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es):

A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION

C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):

Two agencies, SPAN, Inc./ Meals on Wheels and Communities in Schools North Texas have decided to not participate in the VISTA program for year 2. The performance measures and portions of the narrative will be revised to reflect this change

10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.013

10b. TITLE: VISTA State

9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:

Corporation for National and Community Service

11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:

AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas

Cost Share:

11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):

13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 11/30/14 END DATE: 11/28/15

14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant TX 26 b.Program TX 26

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #:

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?

YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:

DATE:

NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?

YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. NO

18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.

a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:
Diana M. Corona

b. TITLE:
Executive Director

c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:
(940) 383-1508

d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

e. DATE SIGNED:
11/05/14

Target Populations

Individuals & families experiencing homelessness

Low-income adults

Low-income youth

Low-income communities

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Executive Summary

Name of Legal Applicant: Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. dba RSVP: Serving Denton County

Henceforth in this application referred to as: Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc.

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: As a VISTA Intermediary agency serving nonprofits, the projects align with at least 3 CNCS Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, and Education and expect to benefit school-age children, low-income elderly, the homeless, and countless others. Initially, the project will focus on VISTA placement in the Denton County area but will work to expand the program to Grayson, Wise, Cooke and Collin Counties. These counties border Denton County to the North, East and West. The goal of the project will be Capacity Building for those area nonprofits rebounding from severe funding cuts. VISTAs will serve in the areas of volunteer recruitment and training, resource development, fundraising and grant writing, special event coordinators, and marketing and community relations. All agencies seeking VISTA resources are in-line with either poverty alleviation or support of those missions.

NUMBER OF VISTAS REQUESTED: Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. is requesting a total of 21 VISTAs: 15 standard, 5 Cost Share and 1 VISTA Leader for placement with agencies.

LENGTH OF TIME: Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. will coordinate this project for 3 years.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION/MISSION:

ORGANIZATION HISTORY- Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. began in 1973 funded through a federal grant of ACTION (federal volunteer agency). In 1983, RSVP bravely departed from the norm of having a local sponsor and became incorporated as a tax-exempt, non-profit agency. The central office moved into its present location at 1316 E. McKinney in Denton, Texas in 2012. The building being awarded by the Denton County Commissioners Court. The lease amount is \$1.00 annually. The satellite office is located in Lewisville, the southern part of the county.

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MISSION AND GOALS The ultimate intent of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. is to address and solve community problems by developing and implementing volunteer assignments directly driven by volunteers not only 55 and up but also individuals of all ages that will utilize their talents and experience. Historically, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has focused on effective management of volunteers 55 and up but with support from community leaders and its own Board of Directors, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. will now take on the efforts of coordinating another branch of national service-AmeriCorps VISTA. It is a requirement of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. that all volunteer assignments have measurable outcomes in order to gauge the impact they have on the community. The agency holds a long history of developing and implementing signature projects which lend to measuring impact in the community. With this tenure and great experience behind it, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. is a natural vehicle for VISTA placement.

MISSION STATEMENT: Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. identifies and addresses issues impacting communities of Denton County and through volunteer service enhances the lives of volunteers as well as those they serve.

Summary of Accomplishments

The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has successfully secured many partners to host AmeriCorps VISTA members: Communities in Schools North Texas, Denton County Friends of the Family, PediPlace, Interfaith Ministries of Denton, Our Daily Bread, Habitat for Humanity of Denton County, Giving Hope, Inc., Serve Denton, SPAN, Inc. / Meals on Wheels of Denton County, and Hearts for Homes. Interest in hosting VISTA members has been expressed by the Denton County Health Department, Woman to Woman Pregnancy Resource Center, Riding Unlimited, Christian Community Action and Salvation Army in Lewisville, TX and Wise County Committee on Aging in Decatur, TX.

At this time, 10 AmeriCorps VISTA members are serving at nonprofit agencies throughout Denton County in the capacities of volunteer program development and recruitment, marketing and community relations, resource development, fundraising and grant writing and communications and publicity. Expansion of the AmeriCorps VISTA program to Wise, Collin, Cooke and Grayson Counties is ongoing.

AmeriCorps VISTA members have recruited 331 volunteers, 4 of which are Baby Boomers to bring much needed help to their agencies. These volunteers primarily have been recruited at Hearts for Homes to repair and rehabilitate homes of low-income seniors and Communities in Schools of North

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Texas to mentor children at risk of dropping out of school. These volunteers recruited by VISTA members have served a cumulative 752 hours.

In the first 6 months of the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas program, VISTA members have raised \$34,545 for their agencies through grant writing and fundraisers. VISTA members have also secured in-kind donations valued at \$4223.

VISTA members are developing partnerships to benefit the agencies they are serving. The VISTAs at Communities in Schools North Texas, Denton County Friends of the Family and Hearts for Homes are working with area churches and student organizations at Texas Woman's University and University of North Texas to recruit volunteers and assist with fundraisers.

Marketing and communication materials developed by VISTA members can be found distributed throughout the community, email messages and on social media outlets. Materials created include posters, flyers, postcards, letters and newsletters. The marketing materials created are used to advertise upcoming fundraisers and agency events, to increase awareness of the agencies' missions and the people served, to educate the public about the needs of the agency and to express gratitude for support.

Need

Funding shortfalls have seen a great strain on many area nonprofits as they experience continued significant funding cuts from federal, state and local dollars such as United Way. The Denton Record Chronicle reported that the Denton County Commissioners Court is set to follow through on recommendations from the county's social service committee to lower funding to agencies that help children and poor or disadvantaged residents (July 14, 2014). With more than 40 years of building and maintaining key community relationships with these affected organizations, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. is a natural resource for supporting those agencies which will be taxed to provide services. The anticipated jump in the general population will bring about an increased need for social services. This need will in turn impact nonprofits and social services across our communities.

The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project will encompass Denton, Collin, Grayson, Cooke and Wise Counties with concentration on Denton County. According to 2013 U. S. Census data estimates, the total population of the five county areas is 1,804,918. Collin and Denton counties grew by 61% and 68% respectively since the 2000 U.S. Census, primarily in the suburban areas of the counties. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) considers Denton and Collin counties as urban even though a large portion of each county is rural and farming in nature. Grayson, Cooke and Wise Counties are considered rural. The 2014 federal poverty line for a family of four is \$23,850. The

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percentages of persons below the poverty level for each county are as follows: Denton 9.7%, Collin 8.8%, Grayson 16.7%, Cooke 13.9% and Wise 10.8%. As for families with children, Denton and Collin counties poverty rates are low at 7 percent each but since 2000 the rate has more than doubled in Collin County and has increased by 88% in Denton County (2012 Beyond ABC report).

A number of the VISTA site agencies provide services to those within the poverty guideline. Across the counties there are numerous food banks, soup kitchens, a Homeless Coalition, employment services, thrift stores, to list a few. There are agencies that assist with transitional housing as well as student mentoring and tutoring for those students within at risk designated schools

Strengthening Communities

In order to service the county effectively, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. established not only a main office in Denton but also a branch office in the southern part of the county in Lewisville. Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has developed long lasting relationships with many community partners. As programs are developed to meet emerging needs the partnerships with agencies fall in place. True collaborations have been established with all 4 county hospitals, the Denton County Health Department, Denton County Probate Courts, Lewisville, Little Elm, Sanger and Denton Independent School Districts, University of North Texas, United Way of Denton County and a number of large special event planning committees, Susan G. Komen in particular.

Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has secured long term funding from 3 municipalities in Denton County. It is charged with recruitment and placement of volunteers. The most recent example of community support lending towards sustainability is the awarding of a \$1 a year lease of a County building. Renovation funding was supported by the CoServ Charitable Foundation and labor through the Denton County Sheriff's Department and Facilities Department.

All of the proposed VISTA sites are long standing partner agencies of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc.. Volunteers have been recruited and placed with these agencies for over 40 years. These long standing relationships expedite the VISTA introduction to the community because of the respect held for Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc.

The city of Denton is a progressive, constantly evolving community. Perhaps being home to 2 major universities creates this "help your neighbor" mentality. Former Denton Mayor Mark Burroughs eagerly signed on to the Mayor's Day of National Service and also issued a proclamation. The mayors of Highland Village and Town of Flower Mound followed suit. The City of Denton's newest mayor, Chris Watts, has expressed his eagerness to support national service in Denton as well.

The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas Project will work individually with nonprofit agencies requesting

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VISTA resources to ensure that the VISTA's work is sustainable by the agency once the VISTA resource ends. VISTA members are required to keep records of all contacts made, documents developed and programs created. In many cases, once the VISTA member has developed or enhanced a program, he/she will then train staff and will also recruit and train a volunteer to carry on the activity. Each month, the VISTAs report how the work they are doing will be sustainable to the agency once they are no longer there.

As a VISTA Intermediary, the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project will work with each agency to develop the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD). The VISTA Project Director will work with each sub-site to ensure that the program is sustainable and encompasses the mission of AmeriCorps VISTA.

The VISTA members will primarily be used in the following capacities: volunteer recruitment and training, resource development and fundraising, marketing and community relations, and the evaluation and enhancement of existing programs to streamline activities in order to serve more.

AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas is requesting a total of 21 VISTAs: 15 standard VISTAs, 5 cost-share VISTAs and 1 VISTA Leader.

In the first year of VISTA at a partner agency, the VISTA member will lay the groundwork for the 3 year project. The second year VISTA member will build upon the successes of the first year and expand what has been started. The third year of the VISTA project will focus on completing training materials and cementing community partnerships developed over the course of the project. The VISTA members will recruit and train volunteers whenever possible to carry on the programs developed and enhanced through the VISTA's service. Continually training staff and volunteers at the partner agencies will ensure the work the VISTA members have done will be sustainable for years to come.

For example, if the agency wants to build a volunteer recruitment program the project will be broken down into 3 phases. In the first phase, the VISTA member will research the current volunteer program, develop strategies to recruit volunteers, develop community partnerships and begin recruiting volunteers. In the second year of the project, the VISTA member will continue to build community partnerships, recruit volunteers and develop a volunteer handbook for training purposes. By the third year of the project, the VISTA member will have completed a volunteer handbook, complete a Standard of Operations manual to train staff and community volunteers to ensure the continuation of the efforts of volunteer recruitment and training.

Recruitment and Development

The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project recruits qualified VISTA candidates through a variety of

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means. Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. receives great local support from Municipalities and United Way of Denton County and utilizes the networking resources provided by these funders to recruit VISTAs. Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. is a founding partner of Coming of Age North Texas which provides the University of North Texas support and resources for recruitment as well. The Executive Director is closely tied to United Way of Denton County which is another distribution site of information and will serve as a recruitment resource. The local media are supportive of articles related to national service and are quite willing to comp ads in local newspapers. The Executive Director is an alumni of Texas Woman's University located in Denton which leads to many contacts in the area as well. Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. and the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project use social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to advertise service opportunities as well as share impact stories and successes of the VISTAs currently serving. The VISTA Project Director and the VISTA Leader will attend job fairs, volunteer fairs and other activities in the community to spread the word about the AmeriCorps VISTA opportunities available. The Partner Agencies also assist in advertising their service opportunities through their websites, social media pages and through their own unique recruiting efforts.

To have a successful year, a VISTA should be resourceful and have the ability to "think outside the box" to solve issues related to living on a stipend as well as issues that arise in their projects. VISTAs should possess good verbal and writing skills in order to clearly communicate with the public, funders, project leaders and the employees within the agencies they are serving with. Because so much is done via computer and the internet, VISTAs should have some knowledge of basic computer and social media skills. Most of all a VISTA needs to have passion about helping the residents of their community and solve the problems associated with poverty. Passion cannot be taught. If a VISTA has passion, all other skills can be gained through training and education.

Accommodating VISTAs with disabilities should not be an issue since many of the nonprofits are required to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. They receive funds which monitor these services.

During the interview process, transportation is thoroughly discussed with the VISTA candidate. When discussing the requirements and expectation of the service opportunity, the candidate is informed about transportation he/she will need to have a successful year. Having a privately owned vehicle is required for some of the service opportunities offered through the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas Project. For example, if the VISTA applies for a volunteer recruitment service opportunity, the VISTA member will be out in the community and will need to have transportation to attend meetings, volunteer fairs, etc. Mileage will be kept to the minimum amount needed to be successful in the

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positon. Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) operate train services between Denton and Dallas Counties. Buses and vans are available for local transportation with stops at key nonprofit and service related businesses. Costs are affordable with student and senior rates. VISTAs will be provided mileage reimbursement from partner agencies per the Memorandum of Understanding with each agency.

After attending Pre-Service Orientation (PSO), every VISTA member will attend an On-Site Orientation and Training held at Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. The On-Site Orientation and Training will include a welcome from a local elected official, an introduction to Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc., National Service in Denton County, overview of poverty in Denton County, emergency housing and rental assistance presented by Dr. Alonzo Peterson of Giving Hope, Inc., AmeriCorps VISTA responsibilities, benefits, timesheet and monthly progress reporting, the training calendar and how and when to submit impact stories during service. At the On-Site Orientation and Training, the Site Supervisors are brought in to enjoy a catered lunch and spend some time with the VISTA member before beginning service at the partner agency. During this time, The VISTA Member and Site Supervisor discuss when and where the VISTA member is to report, dress code, parking, how to request time off, who to call when ill or late, policies and procedures (each agency is asked to give a copy of the policy and procedure manual to the VISTA member), communications styles, and the frequency of meetings between the VISTA member and supervisor. The VISTA member and the Supervisor also go over the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) and break each objective and member activity down to action steps. Within the first month of service, the VISTA member will attend the agency's orientation and will be introduced to the staff, board of directors as well as other key stakeholders within the agency.

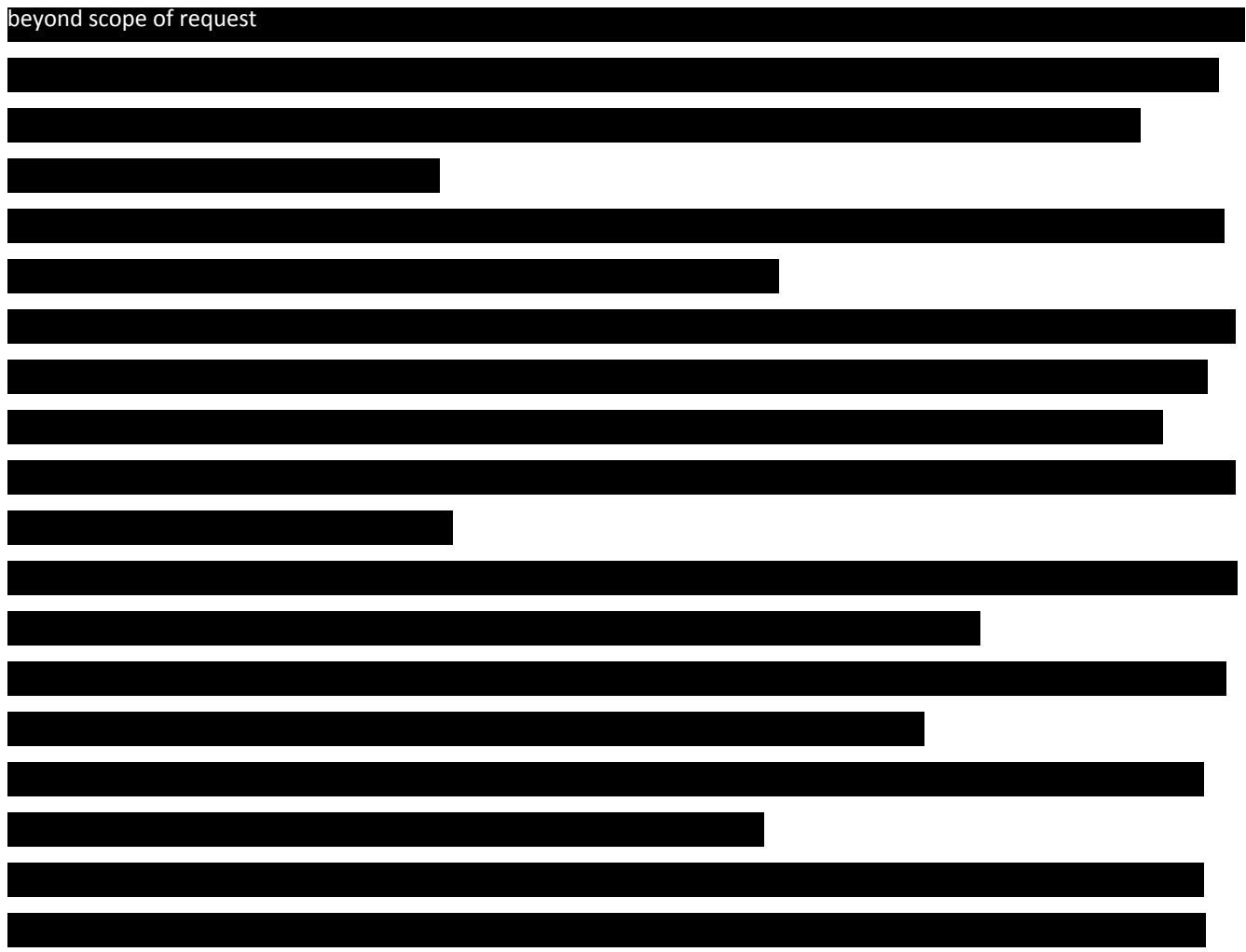
VISTA trainings are held monthly at Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. Trainings include topics related to VISTA benefits, professional development, social media, volunteer recruitment and grant writing. Guest speakers are brought in to facilitate the training. VISTA Campus webinars are also used for training purposes. As an Intermediary, the VISTA members serve at several nonprofit agencies and therefore do not get a chance to see each other often. Time is set aside each month at the VISTA training to report what is going on in the projects, accomplishments made and challenges faced. The VISTA members support each other by providing help or sharing resources.

In addition to the monthly VISTA trainings, each agency offers training, technical assistance and opportunities to attend conferences or seminars.

VISTA Assignment

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beyond scope of request



Project Management

Based on 15 standard VISTAs, 5 cost-share VISTAs and 1 VISTA Leader, a full-time VISTA Project Director at 35 hours weekly is needed. This will enable the project director to have daily accessibility and supervision of the VISTA Leader, support VISTA members and On-Site Supervisors in partner agencies, recruit agencies interested in VISTA resources and recruit VISTA members. The Project Director will design and implement trainings to include the On-Site Orientation and Training, Sub-Site Supervisor Training, and the VISTA member monthly trainings. The Project Director will interview VISTA candidates, accept VISTAs in eGrants, provide ongoing and scheduled supervision of VISTA members, verify biweekly through eGrants that VISTAs are in-service and in good standing, submit quarterly progress reports to the CSO and ensure financial reimbursement of the cost-share members to CNCS.

The Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. Executive Director and the VISTA Project Director meet frequently to review plans to enhance effective project management. Due to years of volunteer management

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experience, the Executive Director is also available to the VISTA members to answer questions and offer advice for issues that arise in their projects. Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has been a Senior Corps grantee for many years and is familiar with regulations of federal grants.

AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas Project Director-Christina Penland-Full-Time

beyond scope of request



Upon returning from Pre-Service Orientation, VISTA members will attend the mandatory On-Site Orientation and Training. At this training, the Vista Assignment Description (VAD) is thoroughly reviewed by the VISTA member and the Sub-Site Supervisor. Each VAD is broken down into action steps to make the project more manageable and provide a reasonable timeframe for tasks to be completed. The VISTA is able to ask questions of the site supervisor and clarify any questions they may have. The VISTA project director is available for support to VISTA members and site supervisors by email, phone (office and cell) to answer questions as they arise during the project.

VISTA members attend a monthly training. Time is set aside for each VISTA member to report the progress made with the VAD and how that progress relates to the project plan. Each VISTA member is also responsible for completing a monthly progress report to be sent to the project director. Through the monthly progress report, VISTA members are able to explain the progress made in their projects, report the number of volunteers recruited, the number of volunteer hours served, the number of volunteers who are baby boomers, the dollar value of cash resources garnered and the dollar amount of the non-cash resources garnered. The monthly progress report also allows for the VISTA members to report challenges during the month, support needed to assist them with their VAD assignments and provide an impact story that is posted on the Texas State VISTA Campus page as well as AmeriCorps VISTA's social media outlets.

Organizational Capability

Through volunteer management as well as its component programs, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has demonstrated the ability to develop and maintain service provision that impacts residents throughout

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the various communities in Denton County and that can serve as a model for other agencies throughout Texas and other regions of the country. An example of program development and volunteer management can be demonstrated in the Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. Rockin' Reader Program. The Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. Rockin' Reader Program promotes academic success by building listening vocabulary and fostering an appreciation of reading through the service of RSVP volunteers. The Rockin' Reader program was developed in 2001 with a few volunteers in 1 Denton Independent School District elementary school. Today, the program boast over 45 RSVP volunteers reading to kindergarten and first grade students in 3 school districts in Denton County.

Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. has an ongoing relationship with most of the Denton County human and social service providers as well as with the University of North Texas (UNT) and Texas Woman's University (TWU) both located in the city of Denton. The Executive Director is bilingual and brings more than 36 years of experience in managing programs in the nonprofit arena. Of those 36 years, she has been involved with RSVP more than 24 years. She is a past president of the Texas Senior Corps Association and serves as the treasurer of the National Senior Corps Association. New staff is trained by the Executive Director and are introduced to all requirements by various funding sources. The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. sponsors AmeriCorps VISTA members at Denton County Friends of the Family, Communities in Schools North Texas, PediPlace, Interfaith Ministries Denton, Our Daily Bread, Habitat for Humanity of Denton County, Hearts for Homes, Giving Hope, Inc., SPAN, Inc. /Meals on Wheels of Denton County, Serve Denton and a VISTA Leader at Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. The VISTA members' duties include volunteer recruitment and training, marketing and community engagement, development of community partnerships, database development and integration, resource development and fundraising.

Based on 15 standard VISTAs, 5 cost-share VISTAs and 1 VISTA Leader, a full-time VISTA Project Director at 35 hours weekly is needed. This will enable the project director to have daily accessibility and supervision of the VISTA Leader, support VISTA members and On-Site Supervisors in partner agencies, recruit agencies interested in VISTA resources and recruit VISTA members. The Project Director will design and implement trainings to include the On-Site Orientation and Training, Sub-Site Supervisor Training, and the VISTA member monthly trainings. The Project Director will interview VISTA candidates, accept VISTAs in eGrants, provide ongoing and scheduled supervision of VISTA members, verify biweekly through eGrants that VISTAs are in-service and in good standing, submit quarterly progress reports to the CSO and ensure financial reimbursement of the cost-share members to CNCS.

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The Executive Director of Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. will provide support in areas of agency recruitment, media relations and will be primarily responsible for creating the VISTA budget. The Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant for Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. will process the expenses and income through QuickBooks software. All other staff is available to assist with set-up of trainings, distribution of recruitment materials, and referring potential applicants to the project director. The Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. Board of Directors also provides support through providing meeting space for larger trainings and distribution of recruitment materials throughout their networks.

Office resources are provided to all VISTA members through the partner agencies to include office and desk space, access to computer and phone and general office supplies. For agencies that do not have resources to provide an additional computer to their VISTA member, a Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. volunteer has graciously agreed to supply a refurbished laptop computer with updated Microsoft Office software. Giving Hope, Inc. has volunteered to use a grant to offer VISTA members with a 1 time, 1 month rental assistance due to a recent "financial emergency". The emergency must have prevented the household from being able to make their rental payment for the current or upcoming month and the VISTA must be able to provide documentation of their "emergency".

Other

N/A

Intermediary Justification

The VISTA North Texas project will encompass Denton, Collin, Grayson and Wise Counties with concentration focused on Denton County. According to the 2010 U. S. Census data, the total population of the four county areas is 1,624,959. Collin and Denton counties grew by 59 and 53% respectively, primarily in the suburban areas of the counties. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) considers Denton and Collin counties as urban even though a large portion of each county is rural and farming in nature. Grayson and Wise Counties are considered rural. The 2012 federal poverty line for a family of four is \$23,050. The percentages of persons below the poverty level for each county are as follows: Denton 7.9%, Collin 7.3%, Grayson 14.4% and Wise 10%. As for families with children, Denton and Collin counties poverty rates are low at 7 percent each but since 2000 the rate has more than doubled in Collin County and has increased by 88% in Denton County (2012 Beyond ABC report).

Access to health care can be most difficult for families living in poverty. Children tend to be healthier

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when covered by health insurance, whether it is public or private. Most uninsured children are unable to receive their primary health care at a clinic or doctor's office and must resort to using an emergency room where care cannot be declined due to the parent's inability to pay. Denton County's percentage of uninsured children rose sharply in 2010 to 17.4% and Collin County rose to 16.7% in the same time period (2012 Beyond ABC report). Equally problematic is the number of children who are considered underinsured. Most resources acknowledge that the prevalence of underinsured people exceeds that of uninsured people but it is unclear how many. A Texas Medical Association (TMA) survey in July 2012 indicated a sharp decline in doctors' acceptance of Medicaid. The decline can be attributed to "cuts in reimbursement rates, bureaucratic red tape and regulatory burdens", according to the Texas Tribune. Between 2008 and 2011, child Medicaid enrollments increased by 76% in Denton County and 69% in Collin County (2012 Beyond ABC report). Although there is an increase in Medicaid enrollments, it is believed that there are a large number of uninsured children that are eligible but not enrolled. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is a joint federal and state program providing affordable healthcare coverage for working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. According to the 2012 Beyond ABC report, since 2007, Collin and Denton Counties have doubled their CHIP enrollment and based on partial year data for 2012 both counties are on pace to exceed 2011 enrollments.

Counties with disproportionately high rates of persistent poverty are often rural where it can be more difficult for food banks and food emergency assistance to support them effectively.

(www.feedingamerica.org). Wise, Grayson and Cooke Counties are predominately rural. In Denton and Collin Counties, the southern portion of the counties are metropolitan whereas the northern areas are rural. According to Map the Meal Gap study by Feeding America, there are approximately 239,330 food insecure people in four of the counties in which AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas will be serving, of which 45,197 are children. In June 2013, there were 94,154 recipients of SNAP (food stamp) benefits in the four county areas. Of the total recipients, 52,268 were under the age of 18, 35,742 were ages 18-64 and 6,144 were over age 65 (TX Health and Human Services Commission). The number of children eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals has been growing rapidly in the past 11 years. In 2011, one quarter of the students in Collin County, one-third of the students in Denton County and half of the students in Grayson County were eligible to receive assistance through school meal programs. Sharon Cox, Denton ISD spokesperson said, "In Denton ISD, 11,399 of 26,200 children enrolled in school the last week of 2013-2014 were offered free or reduced lunch assistance. (Denton Record Chronicle, July 20, 2014)

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For seniors, protecting oneself from food insecurity and hunger is more difficult than for the general population. For example, a study that focused on the experience of food insecurity among the elderly population found that food insecure seniors sometimes had enough money to purchase food but did not have the resources to access or prepare food due to lack of transportation, functional limitations, or health problems. (Feeding America)

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's "Out of Reach 2012" report, the monthly fair market value for a two-bedroom apartment in Collin and Denton Counties is \$868 and in Grayson County \$708. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as not consuming more than 30% of a family's gross income. In all three counties, a renter must make more than minimum wage in order to afford their rent using the 30% threshold. There is not enough low-rent and Section 8 Housing available for all persons who are considered to be living in poverty. For example, in 2010 there were over 52,000 residents who were living below the poverty level yet there were only 1,505 Section 8 housing units provided through local housing authorities. In 2011, the Denton Housing Authority closed the waiting list for the Section 8 program due to the estimated wait for assistance to be 4 years. Unemployment, inability to pay rent or mortgage and domestic violence are the top three reasons given in the 2014 Texas Homeless Network's Point-In-Time survey. The Texas Homeless Network also reported that there were an estimated 1,340 homeless individuals in Denton County in Denton County when the Point-In-Time survey was conducted and that the medial length of homelessness was 8 months.

Failing to complete a high school education can negatively impact a person's life. People who do not receive a high school education earn less over the course of their lifetimes and tend to be in poorer health. In Texas, 78% of prison inmates failed to graduate from high school and the average dropout costs the community more than \$800,000 over the course of his or her lifetime (Communities in Schools North Texas Truancy (failure to attend school) rates have been fluctuating between 2004 and 2011. Truancy can be linked to dropping out of school and other high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, engaging in early sexual behavior and experiencing suicidal thoughts. In Texas, a dropout is defined as a student who attends Grade 7-12 in a public high school in a particular school year and does not return the following fall, is not expelled and does not either graduate, receive a General Educational Development certificate (GED), continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die. Denton, Collin and Grayson counties have all seen an increase in drop-out rates from 2010 to 2011. Most notably in Denton County where the dropout rate increased almost six-fold, according to the 2012 Beyond ABC report. It is noted that dropout rates for African-

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American and Hispanic students are higher than that of Caucasian students.

Identified Partner Agencies

beyond scope of request



The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project continually works with nonprofit and government agencies that inquire and apply for VISTA resources. Currently, beyond scope of request



Woman to Woman Pregnancy Resource and Riding Unlimited are working on a plan to host an AmeriCorps VISTA member to build capacity through resource development and volunteer recruitment projects. Current partner agencies such as beyond scope of request is seeking to add additional VISTA resources in the area of volunteer recruitment and training. Within the next year, the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project will be adding VISTA resources in Collin, Cooke,

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Wise and Grayson Counties in North Texas.

The AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project began in August 2013. Initially, partner agencies were selected based on well established relationships through the sponsoring organization, Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. RSVP Volunteers have been recruited and placed with these agencies for over 40 years. These long standing relationships expedited the introduction of the VISTA program to the community because of the respect held for Chisholm Trail RSVP, Inc. With the successful establishment of the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas Project in Denton County, more nonprofit agencies are seeking to add VISTA resources. These agencies must complete an application and describe the following information: agency mission and history, how VISTAs will be recruited, project management and organizational capacity, VISTA position and assignment descriptions. Nonprofit agencies applying for VISTA resources must also provide an IRS 501(c) 3 Determination Letter, the most recent financial audit or IRS Form 990 and the VISTA Site Supervisor's resume and job description.

Every nonprofit agency that is granted a VISTA resource through the AmeriCorps VISTA North Texas project is required to provide an On-Site Supervisor who will oversee the day-to-day work and management of the VISTA member. Prior to a VISTA member beginning their term of service, each On-Site Supervisor is required to attend the Site Supervisor Orientation. Topics covered at the On-Site Supervisor Orientation include: AmeriCorps VISTA Overview and Mission, the difference between VISTA's and employees, Prohibited VISTA activities, transportation and mileage reimbursement, Impact stories, VISTA Service Logs/timesheets and Monthly Progress Reporting. Sub-Site Supervisors are required to certify via email to the VISTA Project Director that the VISTA member assigned to their agency is in service and is in good standing. Each month, the Sub-Site Supervisor reviews the VISTA member's service log and monthly progress report for accuracy. The monthly progress report details the advances made on program goals, achievements accomplished, support needed and any challenges faced and overcome. The Project Director maintains continual communication with all Sub-Site Supervisors through phone, email and site visits as often as needed to guarantee the VISTA members are supported at all times.

Funding shortfalls have seen a great strain on many area nonprofit agencies. Nonprofit agencies in North Texas continue to see significant funding cuts from federal, state and local dollars, such as United Way. The Denton Record Chronicle reported that the Denton County Commissioners Court is set to follow through on recommendations from the county's social service committee to lower

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funding to agencies that help children and poor or disadvantaged residents (July 14, 2014). Nonprofit agencies are continually being asked to do more with less funding. VISTA intermediary sponsorship is necessary to help nonprofit agencies not only stretch the funds they do receive to maintain the level of services required in the community but also to streamline programs and services offered to those in poverty so that they are more cost-efficient. VISTA members will work in areas of resource development to find new avenues of funding through grant writing, development of new fundraisers and refinement of current fundraising activities. VISTA members will also be active in volunteer recruitment and training. The volunteers the agencies will glean from the VISTA efforts will assist nonprofit agencies to expand their scope of services and assist more residents facing poverty in the community.

Sites

beyond scope of request

beyond scope of request

beyond scope of request

beyond scope of request